

The biological explanation for, and purpose if any of, massing seems obscure. It could have survival value: a mass of moths presents a large target to a predator, but by massing the number of targets would be reduced. In the case of the "Home for Old Ladies in Wimbledon", it is possible that the moths viewed particular sites with especial favour and that this was the reason for their forming small groups. If so, the relative advantages of the different sites chosen in the air-raid shelter are not obvious to the writer. That the phenomenon is simply an expression of an innate gregariousness that moths (and butterflies and other insects) share with many other groups of animals may be near the truth, but it leaves unanswered the questions as to the biological purpose of the massing together and what it is exactly that attracts one moth to another.

References

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SMALL COPPER: *LYCAENA PHLAEAS* L., IN DECEMBER. — It may be of interest to record here that my colleague Miss Theresa Wild observed a freshly emerged example of this species at Young's Farm, near Hainault Forest, Essex on 7th December 1984. The species normally has three broods each year in southern Britain, and in years when the summer is particularly warm, there may be a fourth, resulting in adults taking the wing as late as the second week of November. Although 1984 could not be classed as one of the warmest years on record, there was clearly a late brood of *phlaeas* in this area of Essex. I am unable to find any other records of the species flying in December, at least not for Essex or the London area. — C. W. PLANT, Assistant Curator, Natural Sciences (Biology), Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E15 4LZ.

AGRIUS CONVULVULI L. IN S. WESTMORLAND IN 1984. — A male *Convolvulus* Hawk-moth appeared at my m.v. light here at Beetham, the night of 12th/13th September 1984, the sixth in three successive years, and prior to one in 1979, not recorded before in my list. — J. BRIGGS, 5 Deepdale Close, Slackhead, Beetham, Nr. Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7AY.